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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 123574
O 042026Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8251

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 3624

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHLAUDEMAN
FROM CHARGE AND LUERS

EO 11652: GDS
TSGS: PFOR VE
SUBJECT: TIMING OF ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHLAUDEMAN

REF: CARACAS 3099

SUMMARY: ON BASIS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT AND MINISTERS AND ANALYSIS OF GENERAL SECURITY SITUATION WITH EMBASSY SECURITY WATCH COMMITTEE, WE CONCLUDE THAT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHLAUDEMAN SHOULD NOT PROCEED TO CARACAS UNTIL SHORTLY AFTER SECRETARY'S VISIT. SHOULD VISIT BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY, WE BELIEVE SHLAUDEMAN SHOULD ARRIVE SOON AFTER BEING SWORN IN. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR, WE WERE ASSURED THAT VENEZUELA WOULD HANDLE SECURITY SITUATION RELATED TO ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHLAUDEMAN. PRESIDENT AND MINISTERS ANTICIPATE SOME DEMONSTRATIONS CONNECTED WITH ARRIVAL BUT PREDICT THAT PROBLEMS WOULD DISSIPATE AND DISAPPEAR OVER TIME IF AMBASSADOR HANDLES SITUATION CALMLY. THIS JUDGMENT WAS ALSO GIVEN TO LUERS BY LEFTIST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOSE VICENTE RANGEL. HOWEVER, IN ALL CONVERSATIONS BUT ONE, GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHLAUDEMAN ARRIVE AFTER VISIT OF SECRETARY SO AS NOT TO CREATE ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS IN PERIOD JUST PRIOR TO SECRETARY'S VISIT.
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2. EMBASSY SECURITY WATCH COMMITTEE MET WITH LUERS AND EINAUDI ON APRIL 3 TO REVIEW SECURITY SITUATION. THE MEETING TOOK NOTE OF RECENT ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS THE FAVORABLE LOCAL IMPACT OF AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN'S MARCH 31 PRESS INTERVIEW CONCERNING VENEZUELA; SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY SCHACHT'S STATEMENT APRIL 2 TO EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HE BELIEVED AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN SHOULD PROCEED TO CARACAS WITHOUT DELAY; AND COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL AGUILAR'S ASSURANCE THE SAME EVENING TO THE POL COUNSELOR THAT, ON THE BASIS OF A NUMBER OF REPORTS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE ACQUAINTED WITH THE NEW AMBASSADOR, HE HAD REVISED HIS EARLIER UNFAVORABLE OPINION OF THE SHLAUDEMAN APPOINTMENT. (AGUILAR HINTED THIS COULD MODERATE THE ATTITUDE OF THE COPEI YOUTH.)

3. IT WAS THE CONCLUSION OF THE SECURITY WATCH COMMITTEE THAT WHILE LOCAL OPPOSITION TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR APPEARS TO BE DIMINISHING, DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST HIM WILL DOUBTLESS TAKE PLACE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. WITH ONE DISSENT, THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE FOR THE NEW AMBASSADOR TO DELAY HIS ARRIVAL UNTIL SHORTLY AFTER THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA. IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE SECRETARY'S LATIN AMERICAN TRIP IS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY, THERE IS NO REASON WHY AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN SHOULD NOT PROCEED TO CARACAS SHORTLY AFTER HIS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY.
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